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## Closed-Eye Policy On Cuba

The U.S. Senate preparedness subcommittee which is investigating Soviet military activities relating to Cuba is apparently getting fed up with evidence that U.S. intelligence for months has been optimistic until forced to conclude otherwise. The subcommittee's report says, for instance, that Central Intelligence Agency officials seemed to reject all indications of Soviet missiles in Cuba until the famous reconnaissance air pictures were made last October.

The subcommittee — and the American people — may now have new reason to distrust optimism on Cuba. A report yesterday from Washington, which is elaborated in Robert Allen's column on this page today, reveals that low-level reconnaissance flights over Cuba have been suspended since Feb. 9.

If this is true, the source of the incontrovertible evidence which overcame official optimism last fall is shut off today. With other ave-

nues of Cuban information at least partly closed, appraisal of the Red arms build-up depends on the best guessing. No excuse whatever exists for such a breach in information of vital security.

But there is a reason. It is that a misguided U.S. policy of going half-way or more with Nikita Khrushchev may now have reached the point of denying ourselves the means we have of arms detection in Cuba. More than fear of nuclear war is behind this policy. It is based on the assessment that Khrushchev is easier to deal with than another Communist leader might be, and that therefore we should not force his hand and risk his tenure.

With the aid of such blindness, Khrushchev would be a fool not to go beyond the build-up in Cuba which he almost got away with last fall. A lot less optimism — about Khrushchev as well as what goes on in Cuba — is in order.